

# MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS OF GENERATION Y FRONT OFFICE EMPLOYEES IN SEASONAL RESORT HOTELS OF NORTHERN GREECE

The case of Sani and Ikos Resorts

"If you want someone to do a good job, give them a good job to do."

*Frederick Herzberg*



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2019



Motivational factors of Generation Y front  
office employees in seasonal resort hotels of  
northern Greece. The case of Sani and Ikos  
Resorts.

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I hereby declare that the work submitted is mine and that where I have made use of another's work, I have attributed the sources according to the Regulations set in the Student's Handbook.

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## Abstract

Motivation and Human Resources management are considered essential to every people-oriented sector. During recent years, in Greece, the hospitality and tourism industry has been facing a constant growth and development, ranking highly in the global charts and competing with international giants. On one hand, having motivated and committed employees is of paramount importance when the goal is to offer high quality service and deep guest satisfaction. On the other hand, the proper management of Human Resources is one of the hotel's key functions in order to maintain its competitive advantage and enhance both employees' performance and organizational effectiveness. Therefore, an HR department able to monitor and hark their employees needs and wants is essential for the success of every tourism business. Nowadays, Generation Y is dominating the existing workforce and a lot of research has been done to explore their characteristics in terms of motivation. Subsequently, this study's main purpose is firstly, to investigate which factors motivate this generation and secondly, analyse the efficiency of the HRM practices from the viewpoint of the employees working in front office positions. For the accomplishment of this objective, this research will focus on Generation Y employees of Sani and Ikos resorts.

**Keywords:** Motivation, Generation Y, Human Resources Management practices, Training, Rewards Systems



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## List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Explanation
HRM	Human Resources Management
HR	Human Resources
PM	Personnel Management
SHRM	Strategic Human Resources Management
AMO	Abilities, Motivation, Opportunity
ERG	Existence, Relatedness, Growth
KSA	Knowledge, Skills, Abilities
R1...R12	Respondent 1... Respondent 12
WTTC	World Travel & Tourism Council
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization



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# 1 Introduction

Motivation has been a ubiquitous topic of discussion and research for many decades. At the same time, an organisation cannot exist without people. The hospitality industry in particular, being a people-oriented sector, recognizes the importance of having motivated employees that give the best of their abilities and performance. Similar to other businesses, a hospitality organisation needs to have employees with varying levels of knowledge, skills and competencies, and yet being able provide enough motivation for them to thrive in the workplace. The only way of achieving that is by having concrete Human Resource Management (HRM) practices that can be adjusted and hence, efficient in motivating employees. In the days to come, the world will be witnessing Generation Y prevailing in every workplace as by 2025, millennials will comprise three-quarters of the global workforce (Catalyst, 2018). Millennials are said to be multitaskers, entrepreneurial, environmentally conscious and progressive. Motivational factors that affect this generation have become a subject of study for many years (Pyoria, et al., 2017). The present study will investigate what elements motivate this generation's front office employees in Sani and Ikos resorts and will explore whether the HRM practices used are efficient in terms of employees' motivation. Front office includes both the reception and the guest services departments.

## 1.1 Sani and Ikos Resorts

Sani and Ikos Resorts is a hotel group that has been operating for more than forty years in the Greek tourism sector. Mutually owned by Oaktree Capital Management and the Andreadis family, these hotels, among others, are said to be important contributors of the hospitality industry's overall image in Greece. The main shareholders of the group are Stavros and Andreas A. Andreadis as well as Oaktree Capital Management LP through their subsidiary LBRI (Oaktree Capital Management, 2015). Additionally, Goldman Sachs Asset Management and Hermes GPE are also involved in the general management of the group. The selection of this group of hotels was made due to the exceptional reviews the hotels have been getting in the past decade and the personal experience of the author as a former employee.



## 1.2 Research Questions

The research questions of the present thesis are as follows:

- Which factors, intrinsic and extrinsic, motivate millennial front office employees in Sani and Ikos Resorts?
- Are the HRM practices used in Sani and Ikos resorts efficient in terms of employee motivation?

## 1.3 Aims and Objectives

As motivation and HRM practices play a significant role in the overall vitality of an organisation, the researcher found useful to investigate a specific generation that is dominating the current labour force. Therefore, the aim of this study is to shed light in which motivational factors are considered important by Generation Y employees, that work in front office positions in 5\* seasonal resort hotels in Khalkidhiki, northern Greece. The second aim of this thesis is to explore which HRM practices are used and how effectively, in terms of motivation. The objectives of this thesis can, thus, be summarised along these lines:

- To gain insight into millennial front office employees' motivation in Sani and Ikos resorts
- To identify the intrinsic and extrinsic motivator factors of employees in seasonal resort hotels
- To explore the efficiency of the HRM practices in use towards these specific employees

## 1.4 Thesis overview

The first chapter will describe the aims and objectives of the research and present the dissertation's layout. The second chapter will cover the literature review and describe all the theories regarding motivation. Furthermore, it will analyse Human Resources and their management as the backbone of any organisation. The third chapter will focus on the research methodology discussing the research design, the data collection and analysis and, finally, the limitations and ethical concerns taken into consideration while conducting this research. The findings and their discussion, as well as the conclusions derived from



the project will be outlined in the fourth and fifth chapter respectively. Finally, this dissertation will conclude with recommendations for further research and a closing statement.

## 1.5 Conclusion

In an ever-changing and ever-blooming business environment as the one discussed in the lines to follow, the researcher -being part of this generation- felt that the motivational factors concerning this cohort, are a topic with wide interpretation and room for further examination and useful suggestions. Paraphrasing the words of Melina Merkouri who asserted that 'Greece's heavy industry is its culture' and turning them into 'Greece's heavy industry is tourism', hospitality organisations should and must invest in their people. Without them long-term development and growth will be just far-fetched imaginings.



## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction: Background and Development of HRM in organisations

Thinking of how Human Resource (HR) practices have evolved over the years, one could comprehend that Human Resource Management (HRM) became a concept in the 1980s. Prior to that, in the 1970s, while the world economic landscape was firmly changing due to the fact that the working force was starting to be seen as an important resource for organisational activities, the field was generally known as 'Personnel Management' (PM) (Osibanjo & Adeniji, 2012; Rotich, 2015). PM was said to be more technical in nature, more administrative, as it had to do with payrolls, hiring and paperwork. HRM, on the flip side, was described as much broader in scope than personnel management and it was said to incorporate and develop PM tasks, while seeking to create and develop groups of staff for the advantage of the organisation (Chukwunonso, 2013). Since then, the workforce has steadily shifted from being considered as a 'resource' to being recognised as an 'asset' and, consequently, HRM begun to align individual goals and objectives with corporate goals and objectives (Nayad, 2011; Rotich, 2015). At some point, HRM begun gaining ground in a more macroscopic level as Strategic HRM (SHRM). Delery and Shaw (2001) and Becker and Huselid (2006) identified the difference between traditional HRM and SHRM in two means: firstly, SHRM focuses on firm performance instead of individual employee performance and secondly, it conjointly emphasizes the role of HRM systems as solutions to business problems, rather than individual HR management practices separately (Becker & Huselid, 2006).

Nowadays, the role of HRM in an organization is not always obvious and can be confusing. In fact, contemporary perception frequently limits HRM to recruitment, compensation, and authority to manage a workforce (Haslinda, 2009). Watson (2010) adds another perspective to the definition of HRM combining the workforce with the enterprise and underlines the mutually beneficial relation of employees with the company:

'HRM is the managerial utilisation of the efforts, knowledge, capabilities and committed behaviours which people contribute to an authoritatively coordinated human enterprise as part of an



employment exchange (or more temporary contractual arrangement) to carry out work tasks in a way which enables the enterprise to continue into the future' (Watson, 2010, p. 919).

On the contrary, Saini (2018), defines HRM as 'a system that focuses on human resources development on one hand and effective management of people on the other hand so that people will enjoy human dignity in their employment'. He supports that HRM is involved in providing human dignity to the employees considering their expertise, talents, effort, motivation, skill, commitment, knowledge, engagement, and so on, adding a more sociological approach to it (Saini, 2018).

In conclusion, the development of HRM throughout the years highlights the need to consider and acknowledge the importance of the human factor. It is an unquestionable point of view that proper HRM practices, focusing on the employees, add value to an organisation and differentiate it to be able to gain an edge over its rivals.

## 2.2 Human Resource Management

### 2.2.1 Human Resource as a competitive advantage and a driving force of success and profitability

Starting from monetary agreements to general operational arrangements and beyond, the vital backbone of every business behaviour depends on an organisation's major asset: its human resources. The overall competitiveness of an organisation firmly depends on the skills, the know-how and the capabilities of its employees. HR and the potential they possess are the key drivers for an organisation's success or even failure (Haslinda, 2009). In an everchanging business environment and as Mathis and Jackson (2008, p.4) assert, '(...) productive, creative people working in a flexible, effective organization that provides rewarding work with an earned reputation as an excellent employer should be the goal'. The fundamental driving force to achieve a sustained competitive advantage, that will differentiate the organisation from its opponents, is employees which feel that their talents are valued, distinctive, difficult to imitate and well-compensated (Boxall & Purcell, 2011). Boxall and Purcell (2003) argue that according to the AMO framework employees will perform in a better way when they are able to do so (i.e. Abilities), they have the motivation to do so (i.e. Motivation) and when their work environment provides the necessary encouragement for self-expression (i.e. Opportunity to participate) (Boselie, et al., 2005;



Obeidat, et al., 2016). As Thomas J. Watson, the founder of IBM states, 'you can get capital and erect buildings, but it takes people to build a business' (as cited in Bohlander & Snell, 2010, p. 4). Therefore, an organisation needs to establish an effective HR management in order to empower employee motivation and, hence, performance always in accordance with their constantly changing expectations. As reported by Edward L. Gubman:

'In many fast- growing economies, it may be easier to access money and technology than good people. Competitive advantage belongs to companies that know how to attract, select, deploy and develop talent.'(as cited in Bohlander & Snell, 2010, p.4).

HRM contains the use of policies and practices in the fields of organisation advancement, employee resourcing, learning and development, performance and reward and the provision of services that enhance the well-being of employees (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). According to Armstrong and Taylor (2014), these are based on HR strategies that are dependent to one another and aligned to the business strategy. It is worth noting at this point, that some people object to the term 'human resources' because it indicates that people can be exploited like any other factor of production. Instead they favour 'people management'. Whatever term is adopted the approach should be based on the principle outlined by Schneider (1987) 'Organizations are the people in them; that people make the place' (as cited in Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). In a similar vein, one can argue that all organisations have approximately the same resources such as buildings, land, financial resources etc., and the only 'ingredient' that discerns them from one another is the human resource element. If employees in a business behave in a committed way, work with zeal and devotion, and feel motivated, reaching organisational goals and accomplishing objectives is a unidirectional path. A path to success and profitability for the company. Mathis and Jackson (2008) conclude that if HR is faced as a core competency (a rare skill that generates high value and discerns an organisation from its adversaries), it can lead to efficient and effective results.

### 2.2.2 Human Resource Management practices in Sani and Ikos Resorts

The HRM practices of Sani and Ikos resorts are similar to the practices every people-oriented business uses. Starting from recruitment (internal and external) and selection, continuing to training (on and off-the-job) and assessing performance and ending to motivating through recognition and rewards, this company has a firm HR department that



works relentlessly to meet the perceptions and exceed the expectations of its employees. Recruitment is done internally and externally by a group of HR experts in collaboration with agencies, websites and even academic institutions, i.e. the International Hellenic University. The training is usually performed ten days before the opening of the hotels and continues on-the-job during the season. While appraisals are conducted from the managers once during the season, usually in the end, employees also have the possibility to evaluate the hotel management overall, the working environment, accommodation, food and their superordinates as well. As far as motivation is concerned, 'Employee of the Month' award is one of the means used to motivate the employees as the winner gets a financial reward and inter-department recognition. Working while being determined to reach a goal which encompasses a reward is a significant extrinsic motivational factor. Another way to compensate their employees is the 'Guest Star' award which is obtained depending on the number of references an employee might have on TripAdvisor. TripAdvisor is a website that shows, among other uses, reviews of hotels and restaurants and is taken into serious consideration from the specific company as it is the one that ranks them in the worldwide charts. Finally, front office employees can get bonuses depending on how many private excursions they sell to their guests.

## 2.3 Motivation Theories

To be motivated means to be moved to do something (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and derives from the Latin word used to express movement (*movere*) (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). A person is motivated when inspired by something and wants to act toward an end. An unmotivated person, in contrast, is someone who doesn't feel inspired or doesn't find any sense in doing something. In every business, workplace or organisation, motivation plays a pivotal role by showing the way to employees towards achieving their goals, whether organisational or personal. Motivation is a buzzword met in practically all work settings (Pinder, 2008) and it has been discussed and conceptualized by various researchers (Yusoff, et al., 2013). Armstrong and Taylor (2014), assert that:

'motivation is the strength and direction of behaviour and the factors that influence people to behave in certain ways. People are motivated when they expect that a course of action is likely to lead to the attainment of a goal and a valued reward – one that satisfies their needs and wants' (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014, p. 170).



Nevertheless, one can conclude that employees will perform at their best when the organisation in which they belong knows what they need and desire. Thus, researching which factors motivate employees is a necessity in order to be able to develop strategies and tools that allow them to satisfy their needs and increase their performance. Once the employees' performance is high, the organisation's profitability should simultaneously rise.

There exists a multitude of motivational theories and they principally provide a connection or affect the results of employee job satisfaction (Badubi, 2017). One can distinct two main categories of theories, firstly the Content or Needs theories and secondly, the Process or Cognitive theories. The Content Theories try to find answers in *what* motivates employees. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Alderfer's ERG Theory, Herzberg's Two Factor Theory and McClelland's Acquired Needs Theory are classified under this category. On the other hand, *how* an employee can be motivated is explained by the Process Theories which include, among others, Vroom's Expectancy Theory and Adams' Equity Theory (Figure 1). Nowadays, one could come to a conclusion that a combination of both categories must be put in practice, to motivate employees effectively.

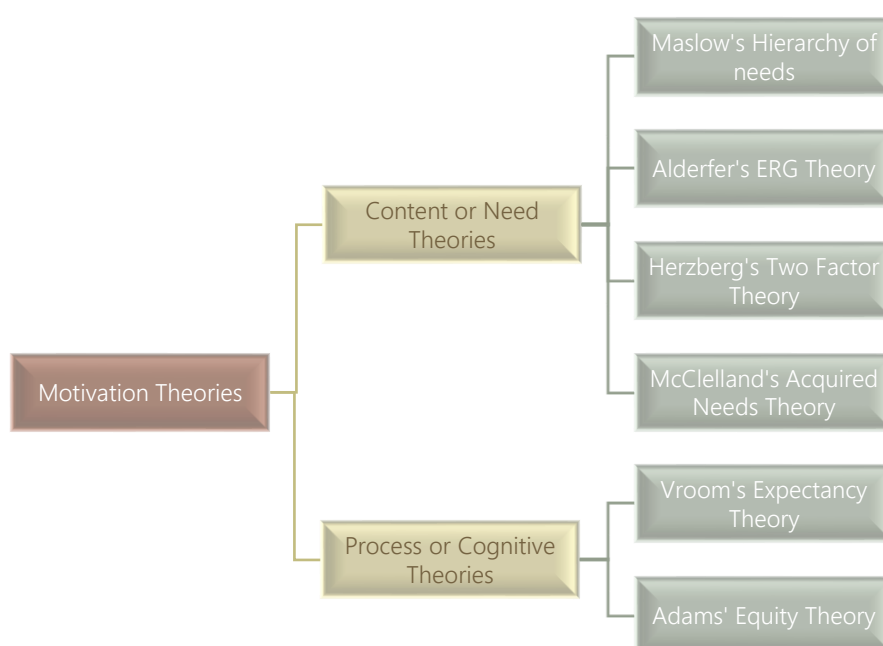


Figure 1. Motivation Theories (Source: Author's own Figure)

### 2.3.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of needs is one of the most popular motivational theories first introduced in 1943 by the psychologist Abraham Harold Maslow, in his paper 'A theory of





*Human Motivation*'. King-Hill (2015), states that 'it is useful to note, that the hierarchy of need is often represented in literature as a pyramid, yet within his writing, Maslow did not use this representation'. The pyramid starts, at the bottom, with the most fundamental needs which are referred as basic or deficiency needs and continues with the self-actualization ones, called growth needs, at the top (Griffin, 2009). McLeod (2007) reports that initially, the model was consisted of five needs, which are described as follows, in order of decreasing priority:

1. *Biological and Physiological needs* - air, food, drink, shelter, sex, sleep
2. *Safety needs* - protection from elements, security, order, law, limits, stability
3. *Social Needs* - belongingness, affection and love, family, friends, romantic relationships
4. *Esteem needs* - achievement, mastery, independence, status, dominance, self-respect, respect from others
5. *Self-Actualisation needs* - realising personal potential, self-fulfilment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences

One must satisfy lower level needs before progressing on to meet higher level ones (McLeod, 2007). 'Human beings are *driven* to satisfy the lower needs but are *drawn* to meet the higher ones' (Griffin, 2009). A need fulfilled does not play the role of a motivator as Maslow claimed and one can then move upward. However, regarding the structure of his hierarchy, he repositioned arguing that the order 'is not nearly as rigid' (Maslow, 1987) as he may have implied in his earlier version of the model (McLeod, 2007). A lot of factors can contribute to an individual's motivation and while, for someone, safety needs may be important and extremely motivating, for another one, social ones may supersede even the most basic needs. Essentially, the absolute goal is to attain self-actualisation which is according to Maslow the pre-eminent state, where someone is becoming what he or she desires to be (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014).

It is worth mentioning, at this point, that over the years Maslow's model expanded and some needs were added to the initial theory. The five- level pyramid became a seven-level and later an eight- level pyramid adding cognitive and aesthetic needs and, lastly, transcendence needs. The cognitive needs follow the esteem ones and refer to knowledge and self- awareness. The aesthetic needs have to do with balance and beauty and finally,



the transcendence needs are the ones that motivate people to help others to self-actualise (McLeod, 2007).

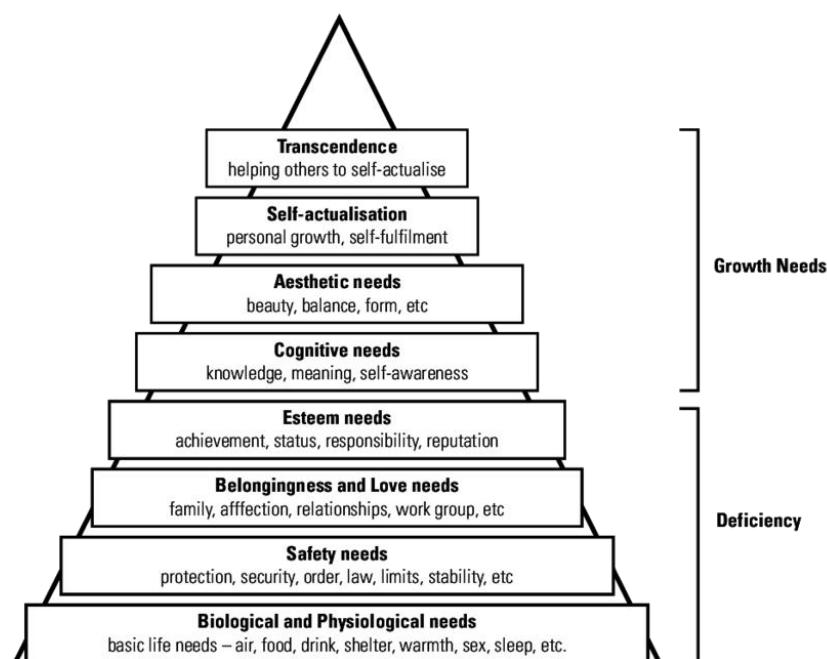


Figure 2. Hierarchy of Needs. Eight- stage model (Source: Barbara Stilwell 2011)

Maslow's theory faced a lot of criticism, as it had many limitations -the most significant being his methodology. Biographical analysis, used to develop the self-actualisation needs, is unrepresentative as Maslow used the top 1% achievers, such as Einstein, making it impossible to generalise his findings to the wider population (Mittelman, 1991). McLeod (2007), discerned that:

'through examining cultures, in which large number of the population is living in poverty (such as India), it is clear that people are still capable of higher order needs such as love and belongingness. However, this should not occur, as according to Maslow, people who have difficulty achieving very basic physiological needs are not able to meet higher needs' (McLeod, 2007).

Finally, the Hierarchy of Needs was accused to be too simplistic and suggested that it did not account for societal needs at harsh times, such as wars or times of financial depression (Cianci & Gambrel, 2003).

### 2.3.2 Alderfer's ERG Theory

Clayton Alderfer's ERG Theory is a slightly different version, an extension one might say, of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. He suggested that core needs could be classified into



three categories, in contrast to the five types of Maslow's theory, namely Existence (E), Relatedness (R) and Growth (G), hence the name ERG theory (Arnolds & Boshoff, 2002). According to Alderfer, Existence is composed of all the basic prerequisites that a human being needs for living and it is approximately the same as the physiological and safety needs of Maslow. In the same way, Arnold and Boshoff (2002), state that Relatedness aligns with the social and esteem needs, in terms of desiring interpersonal connections. Finally, Growth needs relate to self- esteem and self-actualisation needs (Figure 3). Jones and Page (1987), contended that Alderfer's theory

'has a sounder empirical basis and is more complex. It allows two needs to operate simultaneously as motivators and avoids the assumption that a certain group of needs must be satisfied before another set can emerge' (Jones & Page , 1987).

as Maslow supported till then. Thus, ERG theory is more flexible as it interprets needs as a range rather than a hierarchy.

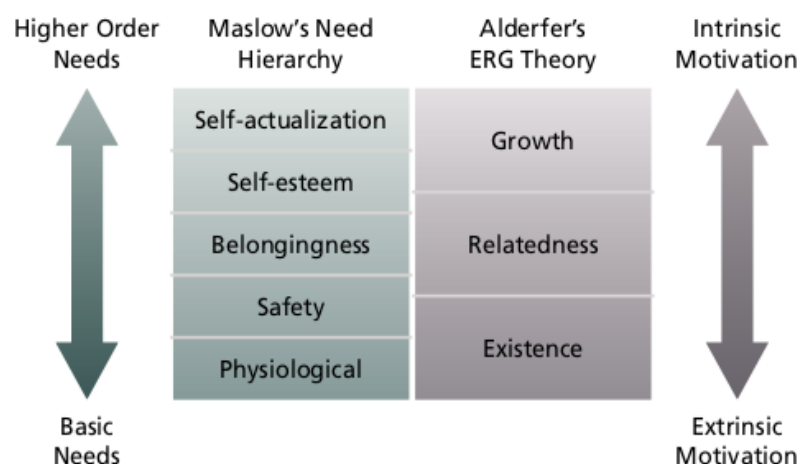


Figure 3. Maslow's and Alderfer's Comparison (Source: [businesscrux.wordpress.com](http://businesscrux.wordpress.com))

### 2.3.3 Herzberg's Two- Factor Motivation Theory

Frederick Herzberg first developed his theory in 1959 based on two hundred engineers and accountants feedback concerning their feelings towards their working environments (Yusoff, et al., 2013). More specifically, they were asked how their jobs made them feel (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). Herzberg concluded by defining two sets of factors that affect the employees' satisfaction or dissatisfaction and subsequently, their performance. The



Motivation ones, which are the satisfiers, and the Hygiene ones which are the dissatisfiers. Principally, among others, achievement, recognition and work itself are categorized as motivating factors, whereas working conditions, interpersonal relations, salary, status etc. are hygiene factors. It is worth mentioning at this point, as Armstrong and Taylor (2014), noted, that 'Hygiene is used in the medical use of the term, meaning preventative and environmental'. Contrary to what was commonly believed and according to Herzberg, the opposite of satisfaction is not dissatisfaction, but rather, no satisfaction. Following the same rationale, eliminating elements that make a job dissatisfying does not necessarily mean that the job will become satisfying (Robbins & Judge, 2013) (Figure 4). With that in mind, when hygiene factors exist in a workplace, they provoke general satisfaction and avoid dissatisfaction. In contrast, when motivators exist, they can cause strong satisfaction and serious motivation (Dudovski, 2013).

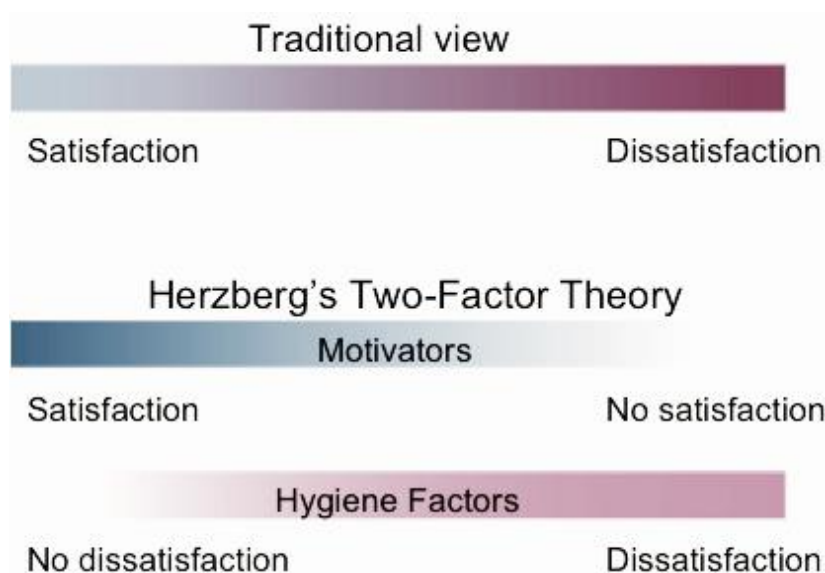


Figure 4. Contrasting View of Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction (Source: Robbins & Judge 2013)

Evidently, Herzberg's theory encountered some criticism regarding its inferences from many scholars. First of all, his methodology was said to be limited, due to the fact that self-reports, that were used to the research, were not objective (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Secondly, the size of the sample was small and specialized, and the conclusions derived from it were criticized as unsustainable and unwarranted (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). Lastly, there was no calculation of the relationship between satisfaction and performance or productivity (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014).



### 2.3.4 McClelland's Acquired Needs Theory

David McClelland was an American psychologist who first introduced his theory in 1961 in his book *The Achieving Society*. McClelland's Acquired Needs Theory proposes that the work behaviour of most individuals is motivated by three needs: affiliation, power and achievement, regardless of age, gender, race or culture (Harrell & Stahl, 1984; Mulder, 2015) (Figure 5). It is called Acquired Needs Theory since McClelland claimed that an individual's specific needs are acquired over time, they can be learned and are formed by one's life experiences. These needs can work as motivators and have ample implementation on managers' behaviours and motivation instead of employees' ones. In comparison to Maslow's theory, McClelland's theory did not suggest a strict hierarchy regarding those three needs, but indicated that some people have higher levels of one need than others (Braden, 2000). To elaborate, according to McClelland, people who have a need for achievement are people who want to attain something in life. Mulder (2015), highlights that upon completing his study, McClelland distinguished four characteristics that are consistent with need for achievement:

- seek an average task complexity
- responsibility for own performance
- need for feedback
- use of novelty/ creativity

Regarding people who have the need for power, they can be described as people who associate great importance to reputation, status and recognition. Additionally, they are intensely competitive and eager to win. This need may consist of personal power (desire to have control over others) and institutional power (regulate the attempts of a group of people to organisational objectives) (Mulder, 2015). Bearing that in mind, persons with personal power cannot be good managers, whereas ones with institutional power can become great managers. Finally, humans, as social entities, feel the need to belong to a group. This need is defined by McClelland as the need for affiliation. The individuals with this need prefer to cooperate with someone rather than compete them and thus, the need for affiliation does not match with the need for power (Braden, 2000; Mulder, 2015). It is worth mentioning at this point, that McClelland added later another need called need for avoidance. The main characteristics of these people are that they do not wish to operate



in leading positions, they prefer to bypass situations that may put them into trouble and they are afraid of deficiency and exclusion (New World Encyclopedia, 2017).



*Figure 5. McClelland's Acquired Needs Theory (Source: Author's own Figure)*

### 2.3.5 Equity Theory and Expectancy Theory

Equity Theory which was developed in 1965 by John Stacey Adams, recognises that an employee's assessment and perception of their relationship with their job and therefore, their employer can be affected by different factors. The central theme of this theory is that employees become demotivated, both towards their job and their employer, if they feel as though their contribution is greater than their benefits. To be more specific, contribution is the inputs employees might offer to a job or the qualifications they might have, whereas benefits consist, among others, of job security, status and rewards. As analysed by Armstrong and Taylor (2014):

'employees assess the fairness or otherwise of their rewards (outcomes) in relation to their effort or qualifications (inputs) and they do this by comparing their own input/output ratio against that of others. If the input/output ratio is perceived to be unfavourable, they will feel that there is reward inequity' (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014).

Therefore, one can conclude that the key difference between Adams' Equity Theory and all the previous theories is that the first introduces the perspective of 'referent' others (people with whom an individual compares their own condition). It is undeniable that an inequitable working environment can turn to be a burden for an organisation's proper operation. Hence, the top management should regularly interact with employees in order to evaluate their attitude and feelings of fairness in the organisation. Many scholars claim



that in order to ensure fairness in a workplace, it is crucial for management to systematically monitor the difference in rewards both inside and outside the company.

Expectancy theory, as Kanfer and Chen (2016) contend, is probably one of the most influential work motivation theories of the 20th century and it is based on the belief that the effort one might propound at work, is complementary to the performance they will attain from that effort, and the rewards they will collect in exchange. In other words, individuals will feel motivated if they believe that sturdy effort can cause good performance and the latter can cause desired compensation (Lunenburg, 2011). Victor Vroom (1964) was the first developing this theory which was later expanded by numerous scholars. He stated that effort, performance and rewards are related in an individual's motivation. He used the variables Expectancy (E), Instrumentality (I) and Valence (V) in order to prove the aforementioned assumption and concluded to an equation that demonstrates the relationship between these three variables:

$$\text{Motivation} = \text{Expectancy} \times \text{Instrumentality} \times \text{Valence}$$

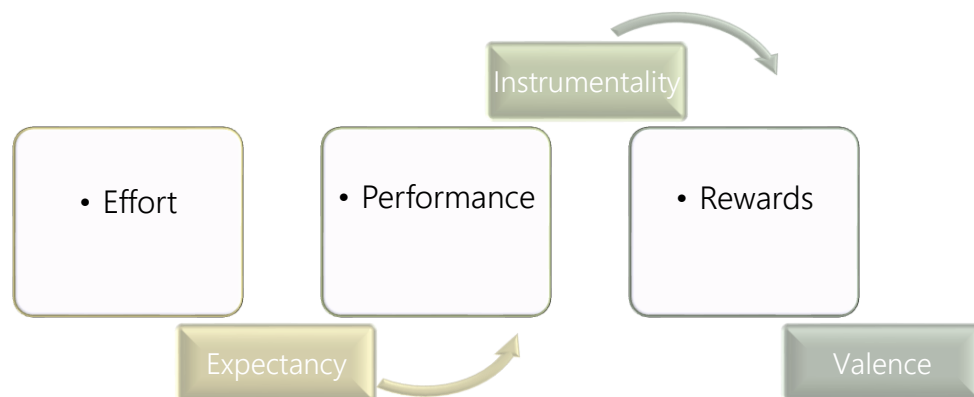


Figure 6. Expectancy Model (Source: Author's own figure)

Expectancy is the anticipated probability that effort will lead to a certain level of performance; instrumentality is the perceived probability that this level of performance will lead to desired outcomes; valence refers to the significance the individual personally places on reward (Chiang, et al., 2008) (Figure 6). Nowadays, managers must have a clear picture of the expectations of their employees to be able to motivate them.



## 2.4 Types of motivation

Commonly, in the classic literature, the most basic distinction of motivation is between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to personal growth, curiosity, sense of achievement, pride, recognition etc. In opposition, extrinsic motivation can derive from the need for money, job security, working conditions, need for status, fear of negative reinforcement etc. Both types of motivation are pivotal in employee behaviour.

### 2.4.1 Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation was initially studied experimentally on animals and it was shown that a plethora of organisms demonstrate the need to explore, play and wonder, even without reinforcement or reward (as cited in Ryan & Deci, 2000). Based on the aforementioned experiments, researchers defined intrinsic motivation as the desire to perform an activity arising from within the individual regardless of any external compensation such as rewards (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). For example, if we asked intrinsically motivated individuals if they would continue working should they get a huge inheritance, they would rather answer positively. This is because they are not working primarily to make money but to enjoy or fulfill themselves while engaging to their job (Vallerand, 1997). One could argue that intrinsic motivation is a sort of self-actualisation in which a person needs to attain something worthwhile. Additionally, it is said to be a long-term motivation in opposition to extrinsic motivation that is considered to be a short-term motivation.

### 2.4.2 Extrinsic motivation

'Whereas the purpose of participation for intrinsic motivation lies within the process itself, that of extrinsic motivation focuses on benefits that may be obtained as a result of participation' (Vallerand, 1997). Ryan and Deci (2000) claim that it is a construct that exists whenever an activity is done in order to attain some separable outcome. In other words, extrinsic motivation is defined as the desire to perform an activity with the intention to obtain positive consequences such as a financial incentive or to prevent negative repercussions such as punishment (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Kuvaas, et al., 2017). To further elaborate, using the previous example, if an extrinsically motivated person was asked if they would continue working should they win the lottery, they would probably reply





negatively. The reason why is because they pay attention to the results instead of the process and if they can achieve these outcomes more easily, they would cordially do so (Vallerand, 1997).

Either intrinsic or extrinsic, motivation is essential for an effective employee behaviour. Many researchers have proved that there exists an association between motivation and employee performance. Simultaneously, it is an axiom that the ultimate goal of any organisation is profitability. Therefore, increasing motivation can lead to increased profits.

## 2.5 Employee motivation increasing employee performance

'People are the catalyst that activates the intangible, inert forms of intellectual capital and the equally passive forms of tangible capital (material and equipment), to improve operational effectiveness' (Fitz-enz, 2009). From this viewpoint, employees are the pillar of organisational performance. Armstrong and Taylor (2014), claim that Guest (1997), analysed how expectancy theory might help to explain the HR-Performance, asserting that: 'The assumption is that 'appropriate' HRM practices tap the motivation and commitment of employees' (Guest, 1997, p. 268). Becker and Huselid (1998) and Delery and Shaw (2001) point out that efficient HRM practices tend to increase employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) and, simultaneously entitle and motivate employees to use them to the organisation's advantage. Consequently, the outcome will be greater job satisfaction, lower employee turnover, higher productivity, and better decision making, all of which help to increase organisational performance (as cited in Combs, et al., 2006). In this context, motivation is crucial for the general performance of an organisation as it is the notion that encourages employees to behave in a certain way. As examined above, an individual may be motivated both from internal (ex. need for esteem) and/or external factors (ex. rewards). So, if a company plans to increase its performance it should keep its employees motivated, intrinsically and extrinsically, and remain constantly involved in attaining organisational goals.

## 2.6 Employee motivation in the Hospitality Industry

The hospitality industry is a service and people-oriented sector. In the hotel business specifically, the production and provision of services from the hotel to the guest are



primarily accomplished through the employee who is the hotel's representative (Maroudas, et al., 2008). Thus, the success of the industry strongly depends on its people and their performance. According to Watson (2008), the success of the hotel organisations relies on how well they manage and motivate their employees who conduct tasks on their behalf. The performance of these employees can be evaluated or measured by their consciousness, their kindness, their image, their mindset, and the way they execute their appointed duties (Du Plessis, et al., 2016). Also, guests' feedback can play a pivotal role as far as performance is concerned. Hence, employees in hospitality institutions must give their best effort in order to perform in the greatest possible way and, as such, their HR departments must have as a priority to keep them motivated. In order to do so, hotel executives may use many techniques to create incentives and fulfil their employees' needs. Intrinsically speaking, the sense of achievement and recognition and the need for personal growth are significant factors that influence one's sense of motivation. On the other hand, extrinsic factors like working conditions, relationships with colleagues, but also guests' satisfaction, and rewards may affect one's motivation. Many researchers conclude that employee performance in the hospitality industry is linked to guest satisfaction and this, in turn, to the organisation's success. Therefore, there is a strong association between employee motivation and organisational success in the hospitality industry.

## 2.7 Generation Y characteristics and motivation in the Hospitality Industry

A generation can be defined as a party of people born at the same date range that experience similar sociocultural events and significant life incidents, such as major economic transitions, wars or new technologies, that affect the way they interpret the world (Smith & Nichols, 2015; Pyoria, et al., 2017). The millennials, known by a variety of names, (Gen Y, the Nintendo generation, generation next, the net generation, the echo boomers, the trophy generation, and others) is the generation of employees born approximately between 1981 and 2000 (Suleman & Nelson, 2011). According to Suleman and Nelson (2011), Gen Y is well-educated, with high aspirations for their personal development and growth and it is nowadays at the forefront dominating the workforce both in number and attitude. They are the children of Baby Boomers (born 1946–1964) or



early Gen-Xer (born 1965–1980) parents, born into the ongoing technological, neo-optimistic times (Chi, et al., 2013). Hence, millennials grew up with technology and the Internet as an important part of their lives (Gursoy, et al., 2013). Although they are the youngest workers, they are fast learners, impatient, the most technologically savvy and want their supervisors and other co-workers to provide direction with clear descriptions of the duties or project to be completed (Gursoy, et al., 2013). Millennials' view of the world has been carved by MTV, AIDS, terrorism, globalisation, the end of the Cold War, 9/11 etc. (Chi, et al., 2013). Apparently, this influence is reflected in beliefs held by many of them who firstly, are devoted to make a life, not just a living; they work to live, unlike other generations that live to work (Baby Boomers); secondly, consider team-building, commitment and cooperation as essential; and finally, recognise that variety will lead to new perspectives, objectives, and perceptions (Gursoy, et al., 2013). All generations have distinct points of view and values, both in how they confront life and work. According to studies, the different values of each generation can be the blasters for most significant dissimilarities and conflict in the workplace. However, studies also suggest that if monitored and managed well, these differences can become a source of strengths and opportunities (Gursoy, et al., 2013).

Narrowing the focus on the hospitality industry and its Gen Y employees and as Solnet and Hood (2008) report, there are specific values reflecting in the working environment that are linked with millennials such as (1) respect, (2) recognition, (3) fairness, (4) supportive management and (5) continuous development. Also, Suleman and Nelson (2011), contend that there are five motivational tools that managers of the industry in question can use and that are related to the millennials' characteristics. Namely, (1) work direction, (2) personal development, (3) social interaction, (4) feedback and praise and (5) meaningful rewards. Another research study demonstrated that major factors which impact millennials' loyalty and devotion include: good work-life balance, meaningful work and adequate attention/recognition (Ng, et al., 2010), showing that this generation is demanding and independent. Additionally, good people to work with and report to, good training opportunities and developing new skills, as well as a good starting salary scored high on motivational factors (Ng, et al., 2010). Considering the previous findings one can



conclude that Gen Y in the hospitality sector, is motivated from both intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

## 2.8 Conclusion – Chapter Summary

This chapter covered literature and theories directly related to the research. A brief historical background and the importance of HR and HRM practices in the overall organisational performance was described. Moreover, the HRM practices of the case in point were also demonstrated. Equally important, motivation, as a critical tool for employee and organisational performance, was analysed. A selection of many past theories on motivation was presented with the intention to have a clearer picture of this topic. Finally, in an attempt to shed light on the prevailing presence and significance of Generation Y in a workplace and in the hospitality industry, some characteristics of the specific generation, as well as their motivation, were portrayed. What motivates the specific cohort of people, at Sani and Ikos resorts, is remaining to be seen in the following chapters.



## 3 Research Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

Methodology is not just a matter of research design and data analysis, but it is also the awareness of using appropriate techniques or approaches such as interviews, focus groups, surveys, questionnaires, observations, in a suitable way (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The purpose of this chapter is to discuss and scrutinise the research methodology of this study. How and where this research was conducted will be examined in the research design. Moreover, the methods used to collect and analyse the raw data of the research will be outlined, and the sample will be thoroughly described. Finally, some ethical concerns and limitations of the study will be indicated.

### 3.2 Research Design

Research design has to do with guaranteeing that the evidence obtained enables a researcher to effectively address the research problem as unambiguously as possible. In other words, it forms the master plan for the collection, measurement and analysis of the data (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2006). Denzin and Lincoln (2005), claim that qualitative research involves an informative and realistic approach: 'This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). This is the reason why a qualitative research, was chosen to investigate what motivates front office employees of Sani and Ikos resorts. In consonance with Denzin and Lincoln (2005) and Merriam (2009), the advantages of doing a qualitative research on motivation include, among others:

- the researcher's ability to obtain a more realistic view of the real world that cannot be understood or experienced in numerical data and statistical analysis
- the generation of rich, detailed information that leave the participants' prospects intact
- the provision of multiple contexts for understanding the phenomenon under study
- the production of outcomes that can help establishing new perceptions



An issue that arose discussion among scholars as far as qualitative research is concerned is sampling. In the past, sampling in quantitative research was regarded as the benchmark to which every sampling method should be compared to (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Some would even disagree with the term sample, as reported by Edwards and Holland (2013), finding it inappropriate, provided that the main focus of information generation in qualitative research is done in real time, during the process, and it is not a result analysed in numbers. From these arguments, it becomes clear that the decision on the sample size is not an easy issue dealt with by some formula, but completely dependent on the sort and layout of the study, the aims and research questions (Edwards & Holland, 2013). According to Yin (2003), a case study can be defined as an empirical research method used to investigate a contemporary phenomenon, focusing on the dynamics of the case, within its real-life context. Case study can be exploratory, descriptive or explanatory (Roth, 1999; Yin , 2003). Taking into consideration the aforementioned definition, the present study can be characterized as a descriptive case study as it is going to examine a fact within its natural context, and it is going to give a holistic description of the way the interviewees view the subject. Case studies fall under the category of qualitative research and have an inductive and an interpretivist character when referring to their approach and philosophy respectively.

### 3.3 Methods of Data Collection

There exists a great variety of methods of data collection used in qualitative research including, among others, interviews (a technique in qualitative research which suggests carrying out individual interviews with a small number of respondents to investigate their viewpoint on a particular situation) (Boyce & Neale, 2006); observations (collecting data through observing a specific group); focus groups (group discussions conducted to small groups of people whose experiences could be related to the research questions); and textual analysis (method of data collection that audits meaning or context of texts) (Gill, et al., 2008). The most common way, as far as qualitative research and social sciences are concerned, is the interview (King, et al., 2018). The literature acknowledges three types of interviews, with the first being the structured, the semi-structured and the unstructured interview respectively. In short, a structured interview is an interview with prearranged questions asked in the same order. On the other hand, unstructured interviews have no



fixed questions and data are collected informally. Finally, semi-structured interviews have aspects from both previous types with fixed questions and additions during the process if necessary (Edwards & Holland, 2013).

In the present project, a structured interview was chosen being the only one convenient for the case in point, as, due to distance constraint, the questions were sent online via a questionnaire. The structured interview, was based upon an open-ended questionnaire with a predetermined sequence of questions, asked in the same order and the same way to all subjects of the research, with little flexibility available to the researcher (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Alshenqeeti (2014), asserts that usually, the answers given in a structured interview are in a 'yes' or 'no' format and although they are usually made face-to-face, they can also be found under the form of an open-ended questionnaire sent online (e-interviews).

In order to explore the motivational factors of millennials front office employees, primary data were collected through individual structured (in terms of design) and unstructured (in terms of content) interviews, of twenty-two employees of the reception and the guest relations department of two Sani hotels and one hotel of Ikos resorts. Most of the interviews were performed online (e-interviews), after the summer season of 2018, through a questionnaire of thirteen questions categorized into three sections (General Information, Motivational Factors and Demographics) both asked in English and in Greek. The reason why the questions were in these two languages was because the researcher wanted to give the opportunity to the interviewees to express themselves as easier as they could. Additionally, the majority of the questions were open-ended ones and total anonymity was kept in order to give the chance to the respondents to be as honest as possible. Finally, two of the interviews were made face-to-face, to gain more insight on the research objective, but again total anonymity was guaranteed.

### 3.4 Methods of Data Analysis

In qualitative researches there are numerous methods of data analysis including narrative analysis, content analysis, discourse analysis, framework analysis and so on. Opposed to quantitative methods, in qualitative data analysis there are no commonly pertinent techniques that can be applied to produce findings. The researcher's subjective



interpretation, yet objective thinking, plays a crucial role in analysing the data in a qualitative research. Krippendorff (2004, p. 18), defines content analysis as: 'a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use'. Thus, content analysis is all about deriving valid, useful and objective results about the message on the basis of accurate rules. With that in mind, the choice of this method of data analysis was the most suitable for the present study. The process is approximately the same in all qualitative analyses and it contains: comprehending, synthesizing (decontextualizing), theorizing, and recontextualizing (Morse & Field, 1996) the meaning of the texts. Moreover, content analysis gives the ability to form the data collected in a way that satisfies the research's objectives. However, human error can be involved in such analysis as the researcher can distort the data, thereby generating false and dubious outcomes. A summary of the research methodology is presented in Figure 7.

Research Method	Qualitative Research - Case Study
Research Philosophy	Interpretivism
Research Approach	Inductive
Research Strategy	Primary Qualitative Data
Data Collection	Stuctured Interviews & e-Interviews
Data Analysis	Content Analysis

*Figure 7. Summary of Research Methodology (Source: Author's own figure)*

### 3.5 Sample's Description

Sampling in qualitative research is a confusing topic, which has faced a lot of criticism. For the result to be precise and valid, the researcher must have solid research questions. As reported by the Centre for Innovation in Research and Teaching, the aim of qualitative research is to provide in-depth understanding and therefore, targets a specific group, type





of individual, event or process. In qualitative studies, sampling ordinarily continues until repeated information or 'saturation' occurs (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This is the point at which no new information is appearing in the data. Therefore, in qualitative studies it is critical that data collection and analysis are done at the same time, so that the researcher will know when the saturation point is attained (CIRT, 2010). It is worth noting at this point, that in order to present a reliable result, the present study relied on the aforementioned findings of Glaser and Strauss (1967), who introduced, in their Grounded Theory, the concept of saturation. Saturation can be indeed the ideal guide as it suggests continuing sampling and identifying cases until the interviewees repeat one another's sayings.

For the present study, the total number of interviews was twenty- two with a response rate of 100%. Out of these twenty-two interviews, two were conducted face-to-face. Moreover, all the respondents belong to the Y Generation except for one that has not been considered at all. Saturation appeared after twelve interviews. In means of respecting the anonymity of the interviewees, they will be presented by a code. The table below incorporates the codes and positions of the twelve interviewees that have been taken into consideration in this thesis (Table 1).

Code	Position	Generation/ Gender	Hotel
R1	Receptionist	Y/ Female	Ikos
R2	Receptionist	Y/ Female	Sani
R3	Receptionist	Y/ Male	Ikos
R4	Receptionist	Y/ Male	Sani
R5	Receptionist	Y/ Female	Ikos
R6	Receptionist	Y/ Female	Sani
R7	Guest Relations Agent	Y/ Female	Ikos
R8	Guest Relations Agent	Y/ Female	Ikos
R9	Guest Relations Agent	Y/ Female	Ikos
R10	Guest Relations Agent	Y/ Male	Sani
R11	Groom	Y/ Male	Ikos
R12	Groom	Y/ Male	Ikos

*Table 1. Respondents' Codes (Source: Author's own table)*



The initial sample consisted of ten males and twelve females in total, from which, five males (42%) and seven females (58%) shaped the findings. All of them were working in front office positions such as reception (50%), guest relations (33.3%) and groom services (16.6%). The results will be outlined using the interviewees' own words but, due to words restraint, they cannot be all reported.

### 3.6 Limitations

It has been proven that all researches have limitations and without exception, this dissertation has some limitations as well. With regard to the research method, qualitative research has been accused for generation of significant amount of data that cannot be randomised into manageable parts for analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 2009). The findings derived from this study cannot be replicated to any extent nor can generalizations be made to a wider context than the one studied (Burns, 2000). A high level of experience from the researcher is required when it comes to obtain the targeted information from the respondent and then analyse it (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). With regard to the data collection method, due to time and distance constraint, the majority of the interviews were not conducted face to face. Even if the method appears to be sufficient for this study, it would be more effective and beneficial if the researcher could carry out in-depth, eye-to-eye interviews. Finally, the study may lack validity and reliability as the interviewee can choose to tell some particular things and ignore others. However, that fact cannot be proved as the findings are based on the interviewees' sayings. Thus, this study might not represent the overall motivational factors of Generation Y employees working in front office positions, but it will only be a description of the case at stake.

### 3.7 Ethical Concerns

As this research project was carried out in the author's own country and past work position, the permission and authorisation to conduct this study were taken orally from the Front Office managers of the hotels. In addition, to ensure that the procedure in this research study allows for entirely voluntary consent, all participants were informed that it is not a mandatory participation and that they could engage in it only if they were interested. In relation to the rights and confidentiality of the participants, their identities are not revealed in this project. Moreover, all the information collected from the



participants is kept completely confidential and is used for the thesis purpose only. Finally, only the researcher is allowed to access this data and information.

### 3.8 Conclusion – Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on the research design and methodology followed to conduct this project. While qualitative research is a complex and demanding approach, it seemed to be more suitable for the objectives in question. A descriptive case study will shed light on the motivational factors of millennials front office employees of the specific hotels. Moreover, the sample chosen to implement this research was analysed. Additionally, methods of data collection and analysis were outlined and some limitations and ethical concerns regarding the research were delineated. Lastly, the findings and conclusions will be discussed in the following chapters.



## 4 Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of the findings generated from the responses of the interviews and e-interviews which were conducted with the employees of Sani and Ikos hotels. As mentioned above, content analysis was used to depict and illustrate the results. After carefully considering all the responses, they were categorised into groups of the same theme and some results were derived. Two of the twenty-two interviews were conducted face-to-face with the interviewees, one at a Sani hotel and one at an Ikos hotel. All the rest were done via an open-ended questionnaire sent online.

Qualitative research is still regarded with scepticism, accused of its subjective nature and the absence of tangible facts, such as numerical data. Thus, in a qualitative research reliability and validity are two important criteria that cannot be neglected. Reliability refers to consistency with which the research will produce the same results if repeated, whereas validity refers to accuracy or truthfulness of the findings (Altheide & Johnson, 1994). In the present study, reliability was achieved using a questionnaire composed of solid questions asked in a way that if repeated, using the same sample of employees, the obtained results would be identical. On the other hand, the stability of the interviewed employees assures consistency. Moreover, objectivity and truthfulness of the procedure was respected and maintained throughout the whole study by the author and the employees, increasing validity.

### 4.2 Interview Findings

The open-ended questionnaire was divided in three sections. The first section dealt with the general information regarding the interviewees. How many seasons they have been working, in which hotel and what is their current position were the three questions asked. The result extracted from this section was that the employees' turnover in Sani and Ikos is considered to be low, as the majority has been working more than three seasons. Moreover, they were all employees of front office departments and all from Sani and Ikos resorts. Finally, the findings will be presented with the respondents' own words and sometimes with the help of percentages to facilitate comprehension.



#### 4.2.1 Employee Motivation

All the respondents answered all the questions and the following results have been generated:

##### **What motivates you at work?**

As concerns the motivational factors of Generation Y employees, the interviewees replied that the most important factor is the relationship with their colleagues (58%). Of a lesser importance were the opportunity of a potential promotion (40%), the guest satisfaction (38%) and their salary (20%). These findings have been supported by researches that concluded that the specific generation is intrigued by the aforementioned factors (Solnet & Hood, 2008; Gursoy, et al., 2013; Dimitriou & Blum, 2015). Moreover, Smola and Sutton (2002), conducted a study that showed that work values are more affected by generational experiences than maturity or age and concluded that this generation is independent, looking for constant feedback and pleasant working conditions. Team building is crucial for this generation, as per Gursoy et al., (2013). Furthermore, Ng et al., (2010), underlined the importance of people at work, personal development and salaries, facts that are all depicted in the thesis' findings.

"I believe that except for the work itself and any individual's inner motivation, the perfect relationship with my colleagues is the factor that boosts me to work with passion and engagement. Of course, the opportunity of being promoted and my salary are also important but less motivating." (R1, 2019)

"My colleagues. Knowing that every time I am going to work, and everyone is there, happy to see me. We are like a family. It is a reciprocal relationship. We are a team, and we are fighting for a common goal. Money comes second for me." (R2, 2019)

This question was in the form of a checkbox, so as to be quickly and clearly answered. The previous words came from the face-to-face interviews. It is worth noting here, that while a raise in the salary is an element that the respondents mentioned as something that the companies could do to motivate them, it is clearly shown that it is not a priority.

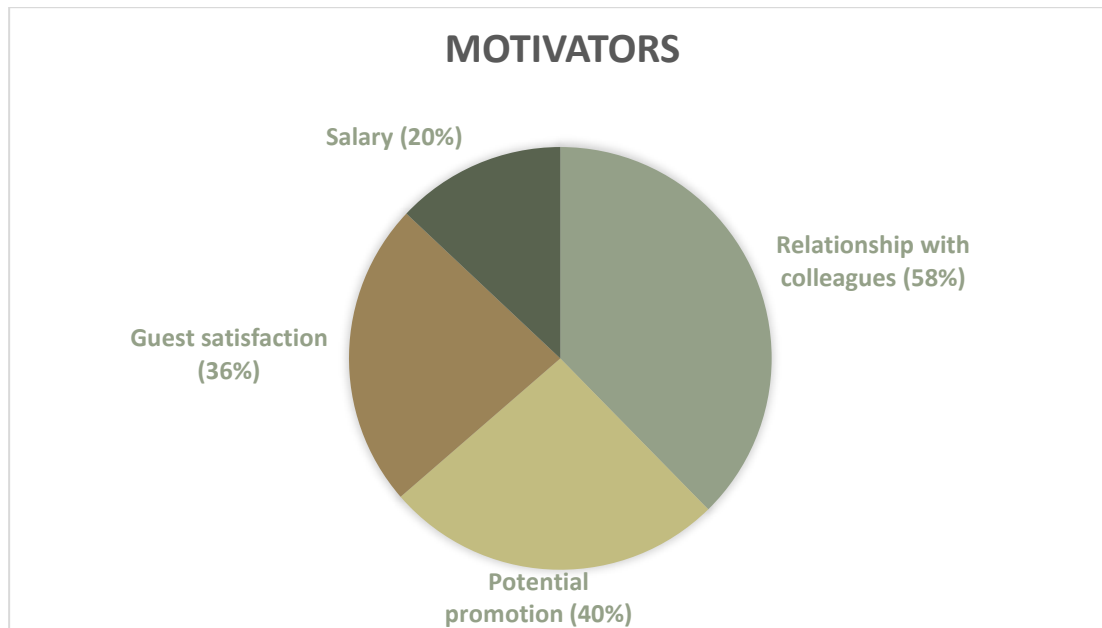


Figure 8. Motivators in Percentages (Source: Questionnaire Findings)

### Is there anything that demotivates you at work?

As far as demotivators are concerned, the majority of the interviewees reported that the working schedule (36.8%) and being away from home (32%) are two facts that demotivates them at work. Additionally, accommodation facilities and the food offered (26.3%) as well as demanding guests (10.5%) are some of the factors that make them feel demotivated. This question was in a checkbox form as well. The result derived can be supported by studies that have shown that long antisocial hours, among others, are one of the top demotivators in the hospitality industry (Wood, 1997).

"The working schedule, yes. It is tiring not having any rhythm. From morning shifts, to evening ones." (R2, 2019)

"I would say the accommodation and food offered from the company has to improve, as well as the daily program." (R1, 2019)

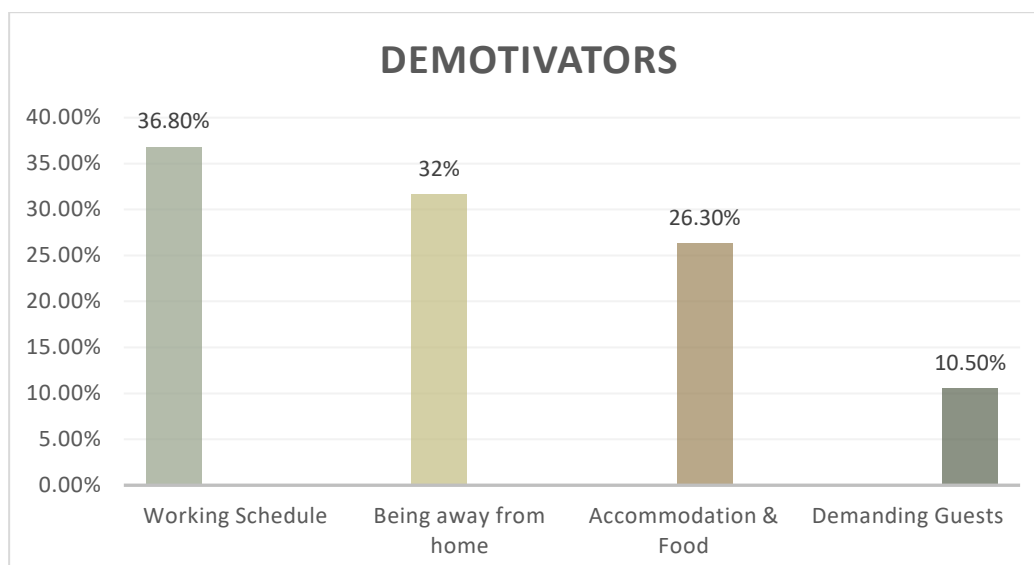


Figure 9. Demotivators in Percentages (Source: Questionnaire Findings)

### Which was the reason for applying for a job in Sani/ Ikos hotels?

The purpose of this question was to investigate if status is one of the interviewees concerns and motivators. The answers demonstrated that indeed the respondents chose to work in hotels of the specific group firstly, for being able to gain experience while building a strong curriculum vitae within hotels of high standards and secondly, for reasons of prestige.

"I was searching for a job and when this chance occurred, I grabbed it immediately. It is a huge win working in five-star hotels of that reputation. It is a "plus" for my cv." (R1, 2019)

"Working in a five-star hotel is a good working experience for my CV. Additionally, these hotels are always reflecting among the best in the world." (R5, 2019)

### How do you feel about your working environment?

This question was asked to explore if the working environment (relationships with coworkers) as an extrinsic motivation plays a significant role in an employee's performance. Apparently, the working environment is crucial for the overall performance of the employees as the majority of the respondents were really pleased with the environment and this satisfaction encouraged their motivation. Several researches assert that there is a relationship between proper communication (positive working environments) and performing in an effective manner (Ranaweera & Dharmasiri, 2016).



"I am very happy with the working environment (8.5 out of 10). There is of course friction sometimes during rush hours, but everyone understands it and there are many ways of resolving any issues that may come up between colleagues and even managers. Most of the time everyone is happy to assist you, to help you learn or to work with you for a goal. Everyone's cooperation and politeness create a friendly atmosphere for the working environment. And when everyone manages to do their part, the team achieves great workflow." (R11, 2019)

"I am currently working at Ikos hotel and we have extremely qualified front office manager and guest services manager, able to handle all the different types of characters that all the agents have, and nevertheless continue to motivate and be in anyone's sight if they need guidance." (R8, 2019)

#### 4.2.2 HRM Practices

In terms of HRM practices, the questions were about training and reward systems, as these are the two major practices Sani and Ikos use for keeping their employees motivated. Furthermore, the selection of these specific practices was based on the value the generation in question places on training and rewards (Hays, 2013). The data gathered demonstrated that if these practices were used efficiently, they could have a great impact on the general motivation. The reality shows that the training can be ameliorated and is rather done on-the-job than off-the-job. Regarding rewards systems, the respondents feel that sometimes they lack equality. For instance, the "Employee of the Month" award is for one person out of approximately 450 in each hotel, which is considered to be quite unfair from the viewpoint of the respondents.

#### **Do you feel that your company trains you enough to be able to respond to daily challenges at work?**

"It could be better. The on-the-job training is quite stressful and in front of a guest you cannot make a lot of mistakes. Things are evolving though, and more support is offered over the years. The past two years the company offers the Butler Service Seminar, which is a revelation, really! A seven-days demanding training before the season's opening. If the knowledge gained from this seminar is put in practice, the results would be tremendous." (R1, 2019)

"Yes. There is a training week before the season and seminars for new employees before and during the season. Our managers and supervisors were helping us whenever we had questions and difficulties." (R4, 2019)





"They provide you all the information needed and the way the job has to be done. Always giving you something new in order to develop your abilities, but that's happening in a very short period of time and at the same time you have to apply what you have learned so far. However, they offer you preopening seminars." (R9, 2019)

**Does your company have any reward systems (ex. financial incentive) to keep its employees motivated at work?**

"Yes. The company has the "Employee of the Month" award and the "Guest Star" award. The first comes with a bonus of 100 euro and your picture on the wall. The second one is from the guests' perspective; it depends on how many times your name is reflecting on TripAdvisor. Again, a financial bonus is given. Unfortunately, it doesn't work the way it should. Out of the whole season maybe 1-2 actually deserved the "Employee of the Month" title." (R1, 2019)

"As a big company, of course, and that kind of system includes two scales. The first is the result of how many private trips, organized by the hotel, you managed to sell to the guests, and the reward is that you gain a percentage of the amount sold. The second one comes from TripAdvisor's references to your name by the guests. The most popular takes the money!" (R10, 2019)

"The only straightforward incentive of this kind is the "Employee of the Month" award (picture on the wall +100€ bonus). It is quite unfair because out of 450 employees, only one faces recognition. But the biggest and most serious incentive, in my opinion, is the opportunity for growth within the company's ranks when you do your job well enough." (R11, 2019)

**What would you like your organization to do/ to offer, in order to keep you motivated or to increase your motivation?**

This question was asked with the intention of naming some recommendations for the hotels from their employees' side. All the responses fluctuated around salary raises and better working hours. Among others, one answer had to do with manager performance appraisal and is worth mentioning at this point.

"I believe that a system of evaluating our supervisors and managers effectively, would be of a great importance. There is an appraisal that is done in the end of the season, when everybody is tired, but while they tell us that it is anonymous, it is not. Our manager can understand who is writing it. In general, I am motivated by the work itself." (R2, 2019)

"Better understanding when it comes to personal issues and mainly, more competitive salaries compared to Greece's median salaries in the hospitality market in general. This is the single most



demotivating factor in working with the company, although they make up for it in other ways. (e.g. growth opportunities, working environment).” (R12, 2019)

“Treating employees like human beings most importantly. Being treated right it's in a lot of cases motivational enough. Being disrespected or not appreciated for your efforts can hurt more than other things.” (R3, 2019)

### 4.2.3 Demographics

The third section of the questionnaire consisted of the sample's demographics. The age group was, as expected, between 23 to 37 years old. The educational background varied with the majority of the respondents holding a bachelor's degree (Figure 10). This finding comes in accordance with one of the main findings of Suleman and Nelson (2011), that supported that millennials are a highly educated generation.

#### Which is your educational background? - Ποιο είναι το εκπαιδευτικό σας υπόβαθρο;

19 responses

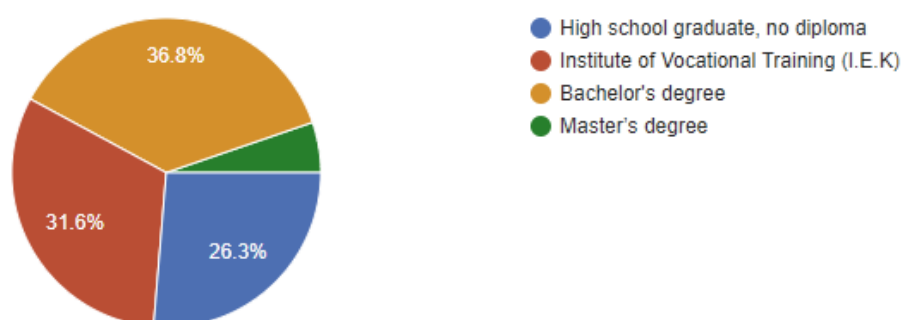


Figure 10. Educational Background (Source: Questionnaire Findings)

## 4.3 Discussion of Findings

The generation of findings was made through content analysis with the extraction of important keywords when analysing each interview. The author, being an employee for two seasons in one of the hotels, tried to be as objective as possible, in order to eliminate the human error. The positive outcome of this relationship was that it was easy to fully understand the sayings and show empathy to the respondents.



The research has shown that these millennial employees are principally motivated by extrinsic factors, especially, by the interpersonal relationships at work. Dimitriou and Blum (2015), found that Greek millennials are indeed motivated by that factor and added that they like being friends with their colleagues and enjoy their job when they make it fun. It is obvious that the ambience in Sani and Ikos is positive, supportive and motivating, with the relationship between colleagues being overall perfect. From an extrinsic perspective again, a potential promotion is the next motivational factor that plays a decisive role for these employees and the literature enhances this finding reporting that this generation seeks quick promotions (Solnet & Hood, 2008; Gursoy, et al., 2013; Dimitriou & Blum, 2015). Despite the fact that the salary is not reflecting the needs of the employees and could be improved, it does not demotivate them. From Herzberg's viewpoint, here, a salary raise can be treated as a hygiene factor, which means that if it does exist it will eliminate dissatisfaction without meaning that motivation will be ensured. Although, one can conclude that in this case the intrinsic motivation of the employees could be greater than their extrinsic one (i.e. need for money), this result comes in controversy with studies that argue that good pay and benefits are one of the most important factors in motivating millennials (Ng, et al., 2010; Gursoy, et al., 2013).

According to the findings, working schedule and being away from home are two elements that demotivate Gen Y employees. This fact can be easily comprehended and proved, as an abundance of studies have concluded that this generation values the most a significant work/life balance (Schooley, et al., 2006; Ng, et al., 2010; Gursoy, et al., 2013; Dimitriou & Blum, 2015). Additionally, the respondents chose to collaborate with these hotels for personal development reasons and status in general. Obtaining a strong curriculum vitae, while working with companies that have a high status, was considered as important from the respondents' perspective and enhanced the results of a recent research conducted by Hays (a leading British company providing recruitment and human resources services), that showed that 53% of Generation Y choose their employers for Training and Development reasons (Hays, 2013). Considering the findings, it is obvious that studies supporting the fact that millennials are a generation that desires a versatile work schedule, one that allows for work/life balance, promotes teamwork and a collective culture and



wants flexible and prestigious companies (Schooley, et al., 2006) are depicted in this research as well.

Traditionally, two HRM practices that are related to motivation and that the company uses are training and rewards. With regard to the HRM practices being used, the employees feel unequally treated and insufficiently trained. Being a generation thirsty for knowledge, training, must be one of the top priorities for employers that try to satisfy their employees' needs in order to keep them engaged and motivated (Solnet & Hood, 2008). Inevitably, Gen Y is the one that is going to lead all organisations in the forthcoming years and trained employers are important in that case (Sa'aban, et al., 2013). As reported by Hays (2013), millennials are a generation that values working in pleasant environments and appreciates being recognized. Although the reward systems are not fair, as reported by the respondents, the company has achieved something quite unusual: its employees are committed and loyal. This fact is depicted by the low employee turnover seen at Sani and Ikos resorts. That means that they are overall satisfied with their jobs and as Brown et al. (2015) have contented, Generation Y employees stay engaged and committed if they feel their job is meaningful and satisfying. In order for the company to keep its employees motivated and satisfied, the respondents recommended a salary raise and a more human handling when it comes to working hours, validating the challenging nature of Gen Y employees (Solnet & Hood, 2008). Finally, the demographics indicated that this generation is highly educated with the majority holding bachelor's degrees, a fact that is seen in a multitude of studies (Solnet & Hood, 2008; Suleman & Nelson, 2011). In essence, Generation Y in Sani and Ikos resorts, is a demanding generation of committed, if satisfied employees and it is mandatory for the company to carefully contemplate the HR practices used to recruit, train and motivate its millennial employees.

#### 4.4 Conclusion – Chapter Summary

This chapter delineated the findings of the interviews conducted. The content analysis appeared to be enough and clear results were demonstrated. Millennials' motivation is enhanced by the working environment when it is fair and pleasant and diminished when they work for long shifts. They appreciate being recognized and a fairer rewards system, apart from a salary raise, would be able to motivate them even more. The following



chapter will outline some recommendations for the company in question and suggestions for further research will be presented. The closing statement will end this dissertation.



## 5 Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Introduction

In the hotel business, as in any service-oriented sector, the human factor controls and handles everything, from service quality to guest satisfaction and beyond (Trivellas , 2011; Trivellas & Santouridis, 2016). Therefore, the hotel industry depends on how the personnel is managed and on how effectively demand can be met from the employees' side (Belias, et al., 2016). This chapter is the closing chapter of this dissertation and its purpose is to conclude this thesis, laying out some recommendations for the hotels being discussed and making suggestions for further research. The closing statement will end this chapter.

### 5.2 Research Conclusion

The aim of this research study was to identify and detect the motivational factors of Generation Y employees, working in front office positions in Sani and Ikos resorts. Additionally, as HRM plays a leading role in developing an organisation and has direct repercussion on employee motivation, satisfaction and as a result, performance, it was crucial to investigate if the HRM practices used are efficient from these employees' perspective. As the research showed, and as far as motivation is concerned, the extrinsic motivational factor of the working environment ranked first. The positive ambience, the supportive relationship between co-workers and the satisfactory rapport between managers and subordinates are the most valuable factors that instantly influence the motivation of millennial employees of Sani and Ikos resorts. In that way, the first research question of this study was successfully answered. Nowadays, living in the aftermath of a colossal financial crisis, in a country that tries to retreat from the huge impact that this crisis left, these employees show that being committed in an organization is not always a matter of money. While adequate remuneration can be motivating, it is not a priority for them. However, there is an aspect that can demotivate them and it is the working schedule, that sometimes is rough. On the other hand, the training provided by the company can be improved and more effective, in terms of motivation. It is reported that the company is working towards this direction and tries to allay the opinion of their employees, who find training not being adequate. The rewards system used is not suitable for these employees as they feel unfairly treated. According to the findings, the company



should raise their salary and respect them in order to keep them motivated. In a nutshell, and in consonance with the respondents' answers, Sani and Ikos have a remarkable working environment but must upgrade their HRM practices. The second research question was answered as well, as the investigation of whether the practices utilised are efficient was thoroughly commented.

### 5.3 Recommendations for Sani and Ikos Resorts

The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) report showed that in 2018, travel and tourism directly supported 988,600 jobs or 25.9 percent of total employment in Greece and is set to increase to 1,241.8 jobs in 2029 (WTTC, 2019). Moreover, last October (10/2018), the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) said that 'Greece's tourism success was an example for other countries to follow as it managed high progress after some six years of difficult times that included political crisis, economic crisis and natural disasters' (Krinis, 2019). Bearing these facts in mind, one can conclude that the tourism sector in Greece is constantly growing. Sani and Ikos resorts, being a company operating for more than four decades in this field must reconsider the way they behave towards their employees. As Belias et al.(2016) asserted:

'[...] indeed, an economic crisis is among the main external factors that could potentially set in motion a business strategy redesign. Under the circumstances, the role of employees seems to move into a contradictory dipole: they are considered the most valuable resource of any company, while, at the same time, they are often expendable due to mergers and personnel cuts. HRM is called upon to play a more demanding and challenging role.'

Re-modelling and reinforcing their HR departments in terms of employee motivation supply, can be a recommendation. Starting from an effective recruitment, continuing with constant and regular monitoring of the employees' needs, then recognizing their efforts, recompensating them and ending with a mutual evaluation (from managers to subordinates and vice versa) can be a simple, yet difficult to put in practice, model to begin changing the traditional way of thinking in Sani and Ikos resorts. Another recommendation could be to re- design the process of work task based on the generational differences that occur within the workplace. It is equally important to reconsider their leadership style. Leaders, who are trained to be supportive and can motivate their staff, are exactly what millennials seek from their bosses (Hays, 2013). With efficient HRM practices, that have in



their core the needs of their employees, both individual and organisational goals will be achieved.

## 5.4 Suggestions for further research

This research has identified the motivational factors of millennials employees and has explored whether the HRM practices are efficient in order to motivate these employees. However, it was conducted based on a qualitative research via interviews and an open-ended questionnaire. Thus, the author recommends that further research could be implemented as follows:

- Further research conducting a quantitative approach, through a survey questionnaire, could be carried out using a larger sample, in order to derive more precise results as far as motivation of Generation Y employees is concerned.
- A research regarding HRM practices alone, and how effective they are in terms of employee motivation, could be realized gathering data from the HR departments of these hotels.
- Further research could be executed on how employee motivation influence employee performance, always as far as Generation Y is concerned.
- Further research, using a larger sample, could be attained measuring the levels of employee motivation and how this motivation may affect the quality of guest service.
- Further research as far as relations between motivation and gender are concerned could be realized.

## 5.5 Closing Statement

Front office employees are the ones in charge of transforming the promise to reality. A huge part of a hotel's success depends on them. The days of 'one size fits all' when it comes to employee motivation are long gone. Supervisors, managers and HR departments must be able to comprehend what motivates their employees in a more individual level. Communication and dialogue between co-workers are the most essential parts, if a business wants to thrive in such a competitive environment. Investing in developing and motivating people in such harsh times and such demanding businesses,





seems to be the only key to success. In order to end this dissertation, a well-known crosstalk between a CFO and a CEO is paraphrased (between an HR Specialist and a Hotel Manager) and adapted to the present research, enclosing in a few words the conclusion of this study:

**HR Specialist:** *What happens if we invest in developing our people and then they leave us?*

**Hotel Manager:** *What happens if we don't, and they stay?*



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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Questionnaire

# Motivational factors of Generation Y front office employees in seasonal resort hotels of northern Greece. The case of Sani and Ikos Resorts

This survey is a pivotal part of a research required for a dissertation, of a Master's Degree in Hospitality and Tourism Management of the International Hellenic University. It investigates what can potentially motivate millennials front office employees in seasonal resorts. Your contribution will be of a great importance for the extraction of results. It is totally anonymous and it will take approximately 10 minutes for its completion. Thank you very much in advance for your time.

\*Required

### General Information - Γενικές Πληροφορίες

1. How many seasons have you worked in the specific hotel? - Πόσες σεζόν εργάζεστε στο συγκεκριμένο ξενοδοχείο; \*

Your answer

2. Is it a Sani or an Ikos hotel? - Ανήκει στο Sani ή στο Ikos; \*

Your answer

3. Which is your current position? - Ποια είναι η τρέχουσα θέση εργασίας σας; \*

Your answer

### Motivational Factors - Κίνητρα

4. What motivates you at work? - Τι σας δίνει κίνητρο στην εργασία σας; \*

If there is anything else, please specify. - Αν υπάρχει κάτι άλλο, παρακαλώ διευκρινίστε.

- ☐ Salary (Μισθός)
- ☐ Promotion (Επαγγελματική Ανέλιξη)
- ☐ Future Goals (Μελλοντικοί Στόχοι)
- ☐ Guests' Satisfaction (Ικανοποίηση Πελατών)
- ☐ Relationship with your colleagues (Σχέσεις με συναδέλφους)
- ☐ Management (Μάνατζμεντ)
- ☐ Guests' Feedback (Feedback Πελατών)
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_



5. Is there anything that demotivates you at work? - Υπάρχει κάτι που σας αποθαρρύνει στην εργασία σας ; \*

If there is anything else, please specify. - Αν υπάρχει κάτι άλλο, παρακαλώ διευκρινίστε.

- ☐ Working Schedule (Ωράρια)
- ☐ Accommodation & Food (Διαμονή & Διατροφή)
- ☐ Demanding Guests (Απαιτητικοί Πελάτες)
- ☐ Being away from home (Το ότι ίσως είστε μακριά από το σπίτι σας)
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Which was the reason for applying for a job in Sani/ Ikos hotels? - Ποιος ήταν ο λόγος που σας ώθησε στο να εργαστείτε για ξενοδοχείο του συγκεκριμένου ομίλου; \*

Your answer

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7. How do you feel about your working environment? (relationship with co-workers, supervisors, managers) - Πως αισθάνεστε όσον αφορά το εργασιακό σας περιβάλλον; (Σχέση με συναδέλφους, με προϊστάμενους, με διευθυντές) \*

Your answer

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8. Do you feel that your company trains you enough to be able to respond to daily challenges at work? - Αισθάνεστε ότι η εταιρία σας εκπαιδεύει σε ικανοποιητικό βαθμό, ώστε να ανταπεξέλθετε στις καθημερινές προκλήσεις της εργασίας σας; \*

Your answer

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9. Does your company have any reward systems (ex. financial incentive) to keep its employees motivated at work? If yes, please specify. - Υπάρχει κάποιο σύστημα επιβράβευσης στην εταιρία (πχ. οικονομικό bonus) ώστε να δουλεύουν οι υπάλληλοι της με κίνητρο; Αν ναι, παρακαλώ διευκρινίστε. \*

Your answer

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10. What would you like your organization to do/ to offer, in order to keep you motivated or to increase your motivation? - Τι θα θέλατε να κάνει ή να σας προσφέρει η εταιρία ούτως ώστε να εργάζεστε με μεγαλύτερο κίνητρο; \*

Your answer

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## Demographics - Δημογραφικά Στοιχεία

11. In which age group do you belong? - Σε ποια κατηγορία ανήκετε ηλικιακά; \*

- ☐ 18-22 (Generation Z)
- ☐ 23-37 (Generation Y)
- ☐ 38-53 (Generation X)

12. Which gender identity do you identify with? - Ποιο είναι το φύλο σας; \*

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Prefer not to say

13. Which is your educational background? - Ποιο είναι το εκπαιδευτικό σας υπόβαθρο; \*

- ☐ High school graduate, no diploma
- ☐ Institute of Vocational Training (I.E.K)
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's degree

14. In case you wish a copy of the study's results please provide your e-mail address. - Σε περίπτωση που επιθυμείτε αντίγραφο με τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας παρακαλώ αναγράψτε το e-mail σας.

Your answer

Thank you for your contribution!



## Appendix 2: Interview Questions

1. How many seasons have you worked in the specific hotel?
2. It belongs to Sani or to Ikos?
3. Which is your current position?
4. What motivates you at work?
5. Is there anything that demotivates at work?
6. Which was the reason for applying for a job in Sani/ Ikos hotels?
7. How do you feel about your working environment?
8. Do you feel that your company trains you enough to be able to respond to daily challenges at work?
9. Does your company have any reward systems (ex. Financial incentive) to keep its employees motivated?
10. What would you like your organization to do/ to offer, in order to keep you motivated or to increase your motivation?
11. How old are you?
12. Which is your educational background?